

Netherlands Patriot Recap Program Begins at the Depot

By Janet S. Gardner, Public Affairs Specialist

Letterkenny Army Depot (LEAD) is setting the precedent for global readiness and establishing an on-depot, four-year recapitalization (commonly referred to as 'recap') program for the Patriot equipment belonging to the Netherlands, one of the United States' first foreign military sales (FMS) Patriot partners. The FMS program is one of the Army Materiel Command's strategic missions in support of global readiness.

"Not only does LEAD provide materiel readiness to the U.S. Armed Forces, but we do the same for many U.S. allies as well," said Depot Commander Col. Stephen Ledbetter. "The Netherlands have been long term allies, and we are very proud to continue to support this partnership."

Stationed at the Depot overseeing this program is the Netherlands Liaison Officer, 1st Lt. Johan Thomissen with the Royal Netherlands Air Force. Working for the Netherlands Defence Materiel Organization (NLDMO), Thomissen will act as the intermediary between the organization based in Utrecht, Netherlands, and Letterkenny.

"This makes perfect sense to be at Letterkenny because of the dedicated space, skilled artisans, established recap processes and existing supply systems," said Thomissen.

This innovative recap program consists of the major end items (MEIs) such as radars, information coordination centers and engagement control stations. Thomissen is anticipating the first piece of equipment will arrive in February. Netherlands Patriot technicians will travel with the equipment per stipulation of the NATO agreement requiring that each MEI be guarded during transit. Large supply containers will also accompany the first piece of equipment.

Letterkenny's Jim Woolf, Division Chief of the Theater Missile Systems Division (TMSD), said the Netherlands recap program is basically the same configuration as the U.S. based Patriot systems minus a few unique applications. "One difference in the two systems is the Netherlands' systems will require applications to accommodate a dehumidifier system designed to prolong the life of the equipment," Woolf said. He explained that the dehumidifier system will run when the system is not in use to help prevent corrosion in the field.

Representatives from NLDMO and the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command's Surface-to-Air Missile, Development's initial visit to Letterkenny was in February 2016 to review the Depot's Patriot radar recap processes and to tour the missile systems' test site.

The Netherlands first used Nike and the Homing All the Way Killer missile defense systems. In 1985, when the time came to replace the Nike missile systems, the Netherlands joined the United States as the first FMS partner in Patriot.

The Patriot units were first deployed during the Cold War in Germany. In 1993, the units were deployed to the Lieutenant-General Best Barracks in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Ground based air defense command that provides high quality air and missile defense support where and when required by the Dutch government.

After the last NATO deployment in 2015, the Netherlands decided to participate in the U.S. Recap program to extend their Patriot systems until 2040.

Each U.S. Patriot unit is typically scheduled to be recapped every 10 to 15 years. The Army officially defines recapitalization as "the rebuild and selected upgrade of currently fielded systems to ensure operational readiness and a zero time, zero miles system." This means: (1) extended service life; (2) reduced operating and support costs; (3) improved reliability; and (4) enhanced capability.

As one of the largest employers in Franklin County, Pa., with more than 3,000 employees, Letterkenny Army Depot covers 18,000 acres and is the premier location for maintenance of air defense and tactical missile ground support equipment used by the Department of Defense around the world.

CUTLINE: Directorate of Industrial Operations Division Chief Jim Woolf shows Netherlands Liaison Officer 1st Lt. Johan Thomissen a recently recapitalized Patriot radar pedestal.

